

Minutes of the Library Advisory Committee (LAC)

For the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF)

For September 17, 2018

The meeting was called to order by LAC Chair, Katharine Lorr. In attendance were LAC members Frank Joseph, Patricia Hulsebosch and Richard Lorr. James Donaldson, Acting Assistant Director, Collection and Technology of Montgomery County Public Library (MCPL) and Interim MCCF Library Manager, Toni Negro, acting for Tanner Wray as MCPL Liaison to the LAC, and Denise Habib, MCCF Librarian were also in attendance. LAC member Mier Wolf, Deputy Warden, Inmate Services, Gale Starkey, and Tanner Wray were absent. The minutes of the April 9 meeting were read and approved. We congratulated James on the birth of his daughter Nora.

1. Membership Report. It was agreed that it would be desirable to increase the number of LAC members from five to 10 and to increase the diversity of the LAC. Kathy agreed to reach out to Christine Del Cid, MCCF's Volunteer Coordinator, to see if there is anyone in her pool of volunteers who has insight into the library's needs and might be interested in serving on the LAC. Some discussion of reaching out to Clarksburg churches and for the need to rotate inmates into the LAC meetings to debrief the LAC on library issues from the perspective of the users. Finding a permanent inmate member is unlikely given the frequent transition of inmates in and out of MCCF. Denise stated that Gale has already approved the participation of an inmate in our meetings for 10-15 minutes per meeting. Denise will work on making this happen by finding 3 people (a pool) who might attend.
2. Interim Library Manager's Report. James reported that his first offer of a new MCCF Library Manager position was declined by the person selected and that no other offers were made. The position was reposted and then closed on August 28. MCPL is in salary negotiations and working on an offer now. Everyone thanked Denise for single-handedly managing the library during the many months it is taking to hire a Manager. She has no subs and serves inmates on a daily basis. The actual number of inmates visiting the library on a daily basis varies widely. There ensued a discussion of LAC's concerns about the lack of adequate library staffing and the concern that Denise merits additional compensation. James said that the LAC had no role in library personnel issues. Frank opined that it should be a high priority for the MCCF Library to have 1 FTE and 2 PTE staff. Frank agreed to draft a letter making our case to MCPL Library Director Anita Vassallo, about the need for more MCCF library personnel and increased compensation for Denise, for us to review at our next meeting. Given the constraints on creating a Friends of the Library (FOL) at the MCCF library, Frank plans to contact Ari Brooks at the Montgomery County FOL (MCFOL) to see if it could send a liaison to participate regularly in our meetings. The MCFOL will benefit from having a greater sense of our situation, and we would benefit from their involvement. Toni agreed that the Library Manager should invite

the MCFOL to an LAC meeting but counseled against asking them for money to support the LAC.

3. Library Board Liaison Report: Toni gave a report on Library Board activities. The Board is working on changes in personnel and recruitment policies, has approved the new LAC Handbook, a new Library Handbook, and has approved three new members and a new Chair of the Library Board, Jensen Chiu.
4. Report on Book Donations. Pat reviewed her 3 sources for book contributions to the jail: Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School annual used book sale; her church, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring; and ad hoc books she picks up. Discussion of deepening our relationship with the FOL in hopes of securing more book donations and watching for other school and library used book sales to partner with. Book donations continue to help, particularly of “urban” literature and paperbacks.
5. New Business: We tentatively set the dates of our meetings for 2018-2019 year meetings, to be confirmed at our next meeting, as follows:
  - a. **October 15 - Offsite (James will check on space in Rockville for offsite meetings -- Mier cannot attend this meeting)**
  - b. **November 19 – Offsite (to be determined by James)**
  - c. **December 10 - at MCCF**
  - d. **February 11 - at MCCF** (Tanner has a conflict, but Toni can attend)
  - e. **March 11 – Offsite (to be determined by James)**
  - f. **April 8 - at MCCF** (hold elections)
6. New Business: After reviewing LAC roles and responsibilities, we brainstormed our goals and priorities for this year.
  - a. We all agree that staffing the library is a priority, and that we must be strong advocates for the library.
  - b. We need to deepen our understanding of the library’s needs. To do this we want to do a brief survey of our users. The proposed survey, once finalized by the LAC, must be approved by the Library Board or the MCPL, and would not be implemented until we have a new Library Manager. Richard agreed to draft a few survey questions for LAC review that could be given orally or in writing by a library volunteer to MCCF library users, so this survey could be ready by the time the new Manager is hired.
  - c. The Poetry Program and opportunities for inmates to engage in related reading, writing, and book-related activities are another priority. Kathy will reach out to Gale to line up dates so we can make commitments for readings/speakers on Father's Day, Mother's Day, and other holidays with the understanding that, per James, we can't do this through the LAC without a Library Manager; but we can work through the Volunteer Coordinator. Frank agreed to contact Kwame Alexander, a Newberry Award winner, to read on Father’s Day. Our Library Manager can recommend that the MCFOL provide

funds for stipends. Toni suggested the MCFOL might find a benefactor for us and we can all think about that. We agreed that we should be ready to host the Poetry Program and Contest as soon as a Library Manager is hired, so it could be held in January or February. As a goal, we would like to host it several times a year. Kathy will mention this to Gale also.

Note: **At the October 15 meeting**, we will continue our discussion of goals and priorities for the year at the off-site location determined by James.

Submitted by

Richard Lorr  
Secretary Pro Tem  
October 2, 2018